

BOSTON Herald

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2001 ■ 50 CENTS

A long-overdue honor

Under a bill sponsored by three Massachusetts congressmen — Barney Frank, Marty Meehan and Jim McGovern — the families of foreign-born soldiers who died serving this nation could apply for posthumous citizenship for their loved ones. It's the least we can do for immigrants who made the ultimate sacrifice.

No one knows how many the act might cover. According to the Selective Service, as of the end of World War II, 125,880 "aliens of various nationalities" had enlisted or been inducted in the Army and Navy. An Army spokesman says there are currently 6,600 foreign-born soldiers on active duty.

Posthumous citizenship means a lot to the survivors. The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars support the bill, which would create a two-year window for such naturalization applications.

It's hard to imagine greater evidence of devotion than laying down one's life for an adopted country. Conferring citizenship on these heroes, even in death, is entirely fitting.